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## THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN

### WINTER EXHIBITION—1916-1917

TO speak at this date of the Winter Academy, which closed last month, would seem, as the French say, like bringing on the mustard after dinner. But to pass it by without a serious notice would savor of contempt for the efforts of our artists. Circumstances prevented a notice of the exhibition in extenso before. As *THE ART WORLD* is a well-wisher of the Academy, what we say here may be accepted by the artists as manifesting a desire to help them.

The exhibition as a whole is mediocre and the Academy's exhibitions always will be so until more great men enter the field of American art, men who have character enough to see that the pursuit of mere so-called "technique" of a personal kind can never result in great art and who will know that only poetic compositions, rendered with consummate craftsmanship, can furnish forth enduring works of art. Until the entire point of view of our artists is changed, until they take the stand that an artist should be an intellectual, moral and social leader instead of merely a clever trifler, exhibitions will be mediocre. A trifling Bohemian will be but a trifling artist; a man without a message can never deliver one; a man without imagination and vision or an occasional exaltation of soul, can never highly emotionalize his fellow-men; hence cannot expect them to highly praise him or rate him above song-and-dance men.

The Academy is also about beginning to sign its own death warrant by hanging on its walls stuff of a pronounced modernistic and futuristic tendency and works more or less morally tainted. If it continues in this path a few years, it will have to shut up shop and hang out a red flag. For when the public becomes ashamed of itself and gets tired—as it surely will—of humoring the insane and immoral futurists and their trash, it will smite them and all those who were weak enough to compromise and to follow them instead of sticking to their colors and upholding the highest traditions of art.

But we can safely say it is the best exhibition the country can produce and therefore deserves the hearty patronage, both as to attendance and purchases on the part of the public. For if our art is no loftier it is largely because our public is, just now, no loftier, does not demand lofty things and tolerates trivial and ephemeral creations so long as they reflect the present national disease—worship of the "flip," the "clever" and the "up to date."

The finest piece of mere *painting* in the exhibition is the late W. M. Chase's "Ready for the Ride." It is no doubt Chase's highest flight as mere painting.

Kenyon Cox's "Tradition" is a powerful piece of line composition, ease of movement and fine drawing and expression. Besides it has beauty of color-scheme, clearness of symbolism and poetic charm. It is impersonal, yet personal. It is and will remain an honor to American art.

Mr. Cox did not waste any time trying to show in how many ways he could ping-pong paint over his canvas, knowing full well that posterity will laugh at the puerile "painter" stunts which now claim the attention of most of the mediocre men

who say that "he is no colorist" because he refuses to bow down to their idol of "brush-work."

In fifty years from now, when the American artist will have come to their senses once again and time will have given to Cox's picture a mellowing patina, it will be heralded as one of the finest creations of this epoch. It goes to the Cleveland Art Museum, a loss to New York.

Douglas Volk's "Miss Gilbert" is a solidly painted poem in green and rose. It will endure.

Ballard Williams' "Sylvan Fantasy" comes near being the best one of his decorative pictures, recalling Watteau's style, and full of poetic charm.

Gardner Symons' "Below Flows the River" is an astonishing performance, almost photographic in its realism. But when will Mr. Simons turn from the powerful rendering of commonplace compositions or subjects and turn to poetry and do more than merely astonish us? When will he charm us? We admit he has become powerful—when will he become adorable?

Of Bolton Jones's "Spring Morning" the same may be said. When will Mr. Jones allow his soul to dominate his intellect and give us a little more of the suggestive mystery of nature in addition to a truthful map of her face—in fine, more idealism and less realism?

Howard Russel Butler's "Maine Cliffs by Moonlight" (Carnegie prize winner) is good, but not quite moonlighty enough.

Van Boskerck's "The Saugatucket River" is an unusually good specimen of his manner and charming in spite of his manner.

William R. Leigh's "The Narrowing Circle" is an astonishingly well drawn and dramatic frontier battle scene.

Henry B. Snell's "Morning Sunshine" is good, because he can't do a bad thing. But he has done better work.

W. T. Smedley's "A Child and a Ray of Sun" is a handsome performance.

William Wendt's "Vandalism" is far below his best work, and our disappointment is measured by the splendor of some of his past achievements.

Maurice Molarsky's "Girl in White" is as clever as Boldini's work and less extravagant. But there is a shrieking spot of white on the right cheek of his girl.

H. W. Watrous's "Lead Us Not into Temptation" is almost masterly. A little hard but very well drawn. It is original in composition and very refined and distinguished in spirit. It will live.

Mrs. E. N. Watrous's "Cinderella's Dream" is good, but she did not make the most of her subject.

Colin Campbell Cooper's "The Temple of Art, San Francisco Exhibition," is a symphony in blue and gold and one of his finest creations.

William H. Howe's "Early Start to Market" is one of the best of his cattle pieces that he has done for some time.

Daniel Garber's "Vine Clad Trees" is a decorative work and very charming.

Irving Couse's "A Vision of the Past" (Altman

\$500 prize) is the most ambitious thing in the exhibition by one of the younger men. The subject is a splendid one, but is not as finely conceived as it might be. The chief Indian, in the foreground, is too young to convince us that he was part of the historic past—suggested in the clouds in the background—an idea borrowed from Detaille's "Bivouac." He also looks too much like one having his picture taken, or at least as not at all engaged in reflecting over the past. Had Couse chosen a type like old powerful Chief Joseph, in the attitude of resting his jaw on his fist in deep reflection, with a wistful look in his eyes, his work would be far more impressive. While the work is well composed it does not strike a high note of poetic expression. It is fine, but not as fine as it might be made. We wish Couse would repaint his main Indian. Nevertheless it is a very dignified effort.

Lawton Parker's "Paresse" (Altman \$1,000 prize), is beautiful in line and color-composition and is very cleverly painted. As a "painter" Mr. Parker has arrived. Its only technical weakness is its careless drawing in several places. Therefore, as mere painting, it is a success and deserves the prize it received. But is it a spiritual success?

Mr. Parker is now at the parting of the ways. Will he make for himself a great career, which seems possible, or will he, after much corruscating shindy-dancing in paint, end in the flotsam and jetsam of the world of art, to point a moral and adorn a tale? This is just a query. He does not begin well. Because, to follow in the footsteps of Manet and paint a naked woman on a bed is to plunge into the same atmosphere of sensuality which engendered his inept and insidiously dangerous creations, in an epoch when it was fashionable to be immoral.

Mr. Parker's picture is not indecent and is vastly more refined, more beautiful than, and just as well painted as Manet's "Olympia." But he should have chosen a more ideal subject and not followed Manet's lead in choosing a suggestive subject. For whatever the degenerate artists of the past have done, no American painter, having a "decent regard for the opinion of mankind" as Jefferson said, at least in our democracy, should paint and send to a public exhibition a picture of a naked woman alluringly lying on a bed. And no body of artists, like the Academy of Design, should allow it to be hung. They should say to the artists: "Your work is fine as mere craftsmanship. But this society stands for something more than mere craftsmanship. We give you No. 1 for your craftsmanship, but we regret we cannot hang it, because it is distinctly immoral in its tendency."

The public must be informed that the reason so many nudes are exposed in the Paris Salon is, because to render the delicate tones of a woman's skin is the most difficult of all things to paint and is therefore a test of an artist's capacity as a mere painter. And so, many an artist has established his reputation as a painter by exhibiting a finely painted nude. Many of these nudes are beautiful and devoid of all licentiousness and some are bought by the French government. Others are suggestive and disappear from sight.

The public exhibition of licentious nudes in the Salon is a capital mistake often made by French

artists. Because we can go into any library and avoid reading the immoral memoirs of Casanova but we cannot go to the Paris Salon and avoid being shocked by the immoral nudes sometimes exposed there.

But this practice is so common in Europe that any American who does the same is to be pardoned—since Americans have not yet developed enough moral courage to be true to themselves, to adopt their own point of view in all things and to refrain from grovelling before European creations in all fields of artistic activity. The fact is we Americans in all spiritual matters still allow ourselves to be dominated by Europe. In Heaven's name, why? We should turn our faces against Europe and invent our own creations in all fields of activity, from our own point of view; but, like cockle-brained sheep, we follow the fads of Europe in art, clothing, literature and even, so far as we dare, its moral corruption. When will we cease being jellyfish and develop a spiritual spinal column of our own and declare not only our political and material but also our spiritual independence of Europe?

The corner-stone of civilization is woman. Because she is the corner-stone of the home. Therefore woman, as she values her own soul, should never debase herself enough to uncover herself in public, because it lessens her power over man—her spiritual power—and when she abdicates her longing for spiritual dominion over men and civilization she cannot complain if men gradually regard her as nothing but a plaything.

Writhe as society dames may, the exposure of flesh that many of them make, in Europe and here, is gradually reducing their standing in the eyes of men and lowering them to mere instruments of pleasure, to be used as long as the men, whom they have helped to degrade, find them amusing and then to throw them away. Civilization can only be saved by women recognizing that not physical but spiritual hedonism is the aim of nature. It is up to woman. She should reform. She should set her teeth like flint and resolve not to abdicate her spiritual dominion over life, refuse to uncover, and never to forget that to maintain even what standing she has achieved, so as to dominate the superior physical strength of the male, she must appeal to his imagination and soul—by enveloping herself in *mystery*, and that to do this she must not put on less clothing but more drapery.

The women of America should refuse to patronize any art exhibition in the future at which is exhibited a suggestive nude.

In our remarks about the Paris Salon we are not criticizing the French public. It is as strongly opposed to immorality in art as we are. We are criticizing the French artists, who, because of their power, in a civilization so largely artistic, show themselves positively immoral and anti-social by foolishly inflicting upon the French public their degrading creations in all the arts, above all in the plastic arts, the most dangerous because not avoidable by the public which goes to see those exhibitions for the great things it also sees there.

The human body is the Creator's masterpiece. Therefore we are absolutely partisans of the nude in art, *but only then when used in an ideal conception* by which no effort is made to call attention in

the slightest degree to the sex relation. Any work of art made with a deliberate aim of arousing our passions is anti-social, will lower the morals and manners of democracy, which should be more moral and better mannered than any aristocracy; hence is a blow at the very foundation of human progress and should be stamped out like a plague. And the artists of America should make a silent resolve not to tolerate crassly realistic, suggestive nakedness in the future and flatly refuse to hang any artist's picture, however cleverly painted, and ignore the pressure of ridicule from the morally asleep in the world of art.

What is said above applies with double force to Hawthorne's "Nude." It has not even the excuse of being beautiful in either line or color composition. The body is ugly in proportion, the torso is too long, the legs are too short, the feet are too large and the toes are deformed.

Mr. Hawthorne's unfortunate essay in painting the nude is an example of the disaster that befalls an artist who attacks a problem entirely beyond his powers. Ignorance of drawing, a lack of every sense of proportion, both in figure and composition of the picture, marks this pitifully feeble work, the garish discord of whose color is quite as banal as the design and drawing.

The employment of the nude figure in art involves in the highest degree the element of taste, joined to knowledge of the anatomical construction of the human figure and a plastic instinct for form and ability to compose.

Many paintings of the nude in exhibitions in recent years have given evidence that artists have been trained in the slovenly trickery and fake standards set up by some alleged art schools in New York where the students are taught the lying formula that color and not form is the ultimate in art. This, with a system of clap-trap brush-work, instilling a prejudice against the poetic and imaginative in art, complete their equipment. We dislike to say these things, but they must be said by some one if we expect to have a change in the minds of some artists as to the proper point of view from which to look at the nude in art.

The following works were worthy of being regarded and *bought* by the public, for one reason or another, to encourage those of our American artists

who are serious and striving to honor their profession. Among landscapes with figures: C. C. Curran's "After the Storm," Dunton W. Herbert's "The Buffalo Signal," Matilda Browne's "The Grange Fair," O. E. Berninghaus's "The Light of a South-western Moon," F. S. Church's "The Blue Bird's Song," Carl Rungius's "The Trail," E. L. Henry's "Spring Flowers," C. C. Curran's "The Blue Scarf," Martin Borgorst's "A Descendant of the Vikings," E. C. Volkert's "Autumn Morning," W. L. Palmer's "November Snow," W. Granville-Smith's "Landscape," H. W. Ranger's "Landscape," George H. Bogert's "October Moonlight," Ben Foster's "October in the Hills," C. Warren Eaton's "Indian Summer," Jonas Lie's "The Deep River," Leonard Ochtman's "Moonlit Harbor," John F. Carlson's "Melting Snows," W. Merritt Post's "Declining Day," DeWitt Parshall's "Monterey Cypress," Allan D. Cochran's "Autumn," A. L. Groll's "The Desert, Arizona," William R. Derrick's "Holly-hocks," William Starkweather's "New England Village Center," Bruce Crane's "October Hills," Francis C. Jones's "Hillside," W. Granville-Smith's "Peconic Bay," Aldro F. Hibbard's "Late February," A. L. Groll's "A Bit of Provincetown," A. T. Van Laer's "Mid-winter in Connecticut," Carlton Wiggins's "Misty Morning."

Among the water-scenes: Birge Harrison's "Moonrise on the Beach," Edward Dufner's "Youth and Sunshine," William Ritschel's "Blue Depths," Emil Carlsen's "The Open Sea," Florence Francis Snell's "The Quarry, Rockport," George H. Smillie's "Near Barnstable, Cape Cod," Carlton Chapman's "Waiting for a Breeze." In still-life Dines Carlsen's "K'ang-Hsi and Quinces."

Among the sculptors: Anthony de Francisci's "Bayadere" is full of talent, fine movement and grace. He is a coming man. A. A. Weinman's "Night," a poetic conception. Cartaino Scarpitta's "Portrait of John Henning Fry" clever; Isidore Konti's "Bust of Elliot Dangerfield" is good; Victor D. Salvatore's "Portrait" good; Paul Herzels "Hungry Lion Cubs" and "Death Struggle, Lion and Zebra," both excellent; Furio Piccirilli's "Peace," charming; Olympio Brindesi's "Rabbit," good. Herbert Adams's "Nymph of Fynmere" won the E. N. Watrous gold medal. There were no doubt others worthy of consideration.

## ZULOAGA AT DUVEEN'S

THE exhibition of the works of Zuloaga as a whole is a mournful mixture of excessive individuality, ugly materiality and crass immorality. To those who know, that will suffice. But to those who ignore the lofty point of view and forget what truly great art means, let us elucidate.

"Mêden agân"—nothing too much—the motto of Sokrates inscribed at Delphi should govern every human being in all his actions, above all the artist who makes a loud appeal to the public to go and see and applaud his works. All great artists across the ages have striven to bear in mind that principle. But Zuloaga violates it in every way—consciously or unconsciously, in many of his works. He negates truth, beauty, refinement, morality, apparently with the disdain of a Mephisto.

Proclaiming, according to the catalogue: "I shall

put into my work emotion, only emotion" he proceeds to defeat himself in nearly every one of the canvases shown by making them "more cerebral" to quote his biographer in the catalogue; that is, he makes them too "intellectual." Therefore his works stir only our emotion of *astonishment*. But this is negative emotion. Scarcely one of his works lifts us above material surprise; nearly all fail either to charm, to amuse, to delight, to exalt or to ecstasize us. They merely *interest* our intellect long enough to satisfy our curiosity, and then we cannot fail to condemn most of them for their utter lack of either optimism, poetry, sunshine or real beauty. All is force, brutal force, pessimistic intellectuality and, in at least three of his works, degrading immorality.

To quote the catalogue once more: "The work is defiant, almost despotic, it does not strive to enlist